

July 2009

ACHIEVEMENT GAPS: HOW BLACK AND WHITE STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS PERFORM IN MATHEMATICS AND READING ON THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

National Center for Education Statistics, July 2009

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/2009455.pdf>

In 2007, mathematics scores for both Black and White public school students in grades 4 and 8 nationwide, as measured by the main NAEP assessments of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), were higher than in any previous assessment, going back to 1990. This was also true for Black and White fourth-graders on the NAEP 2007 Reading Assessment. For grade 8, reading scores for both Black and White students were higher in 2007 than in the first reading assessment year, 1992, as well as the most recent previous assessment year, 2005.

White students, however, had higher scores than Black students, on average, on all assessments.

AMERICA'S CHILDREN: KEY NATIONAL INDICATORS OF WELL-BEING, 2009

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, July 2009

http://childstats.gov/pdf/ac2009/ac_09.pdf

The report is a compendium of indicators illustrating both the promises and the difficulties confronting young people. The report presents 40 key indicators on important aspects of children's lives. These indicators are family and social environment, economic circumstances, health care, physical environment and safety, behavior, education, and health.

ANATOMY OF A JURY TRIAL

U.S. Department of State International Information Programs, July 2009

<http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/0709.pdf#popup>

Juries — usually groups of 6 or 12 ordinary citizens — provide a crucial service for their fellow citizens: Just as in medieval England, where they got started, juries prevent government, even democratic government, from pursuing oppressive prosecutions.

ARTS PARTICIPATION IN 2008: HIGHLIGHTS FROM A NATIONAL SURVEY

National Endowment for the Arts, June 2009

<http://www.nea.gov/research/NEA-SPPA-brochure.pdf>

The NEA's Survey of Public Participation in the Arts remains the largest periodic study of arts participation in the United States, and it is conducted in partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE UNITED STATES

U.S. Department of Education, June 30, 2009

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009320.pdf>

The study presents selected findings from the school district data file of the 2007-08 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). SASS is a nationally representative sample survey of public, private, and Bureau of Indian Education-funded (BIE) K-12 schools, principals, and teachers in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The public school sample was designed so that national-, regional-, and state-level elementary, secondary, and combined public school estimates can be made.

FORK IN THE ROAD: ALTERNATIVE PATHS TO A HIGH PERFORMANCE U.S. HEALTH SYSTEM

Commonwealth Fund. Cathy Schoen et al, June 24, 2009

<http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Content/Publications/Fund-Reports/2009/Jun/Fork-in-the-Road.aspx>

A comprehensive approach to health insurance, provider payment, and care delivery system reforms has the potential to slow health care cost increases while achieving near-universal coverage, according to the report. The potential savings for families, businesses, and the federal government vary markedly, however, depending on whether or not a public insurance plan option is included and how such a plan is structured.

GOD IN GOVERNMENT: JUDGE SOTOMAYOR'S CHURCH-STATE RECORD

The Brookings Institution, July 7, 2009

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0707_sotomayor_rogers.aspx

If the Senate confirms the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the nation's highest court, there will be six Catholics on the Supreme Court. So far this is the most reported religion-related issue in this nomination process. It's also one of the least enlightening: Justice Antonin Scalia is Catholic; so was Justice William Brennan. A better source of insight into Sotomayor's views is her judicial record, including her record on cases touching on the Free Exercise and Establishment Clauses of the First Amendment.

HIGH-TECH IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES

Office of Advocacy, Small Business Administration, July 16, 2009

<http://www.sba.gov/advo/research/rs349tot.pdf>

Sixteen percent of high-impact, high-tech firms have at least one immigrant founder, according to the study. Although these firms are concentrated in states with large immigrant populations, in most other respects they resemble high-impact, high-tech firms founded by native-born entrepreneurs.

HOMES NOT HANDCUFFS: THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS IN U.S. CITIES

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty and National Coalition for the Homeless, July 2009

http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/crimreport/CrimzReport_2009.pdf

The housing and homelessness crisis in the United States has worsened over the past two years, particularly due to the current economic and foreclosure crises. People being evicted from foreclosed properties and the economic crisis in general have contributed to the growing homeless population. Even though most cities do not provide enough affordable housing, shelter space, and food to meet the need, many cities use the criminal justice system to punish people living on the street for doing things that they need to do to survive.

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS: 2008

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, July 2009

http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/enforcement_ar_08.pdf

Each year, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) undertakes immigration enforcement actions involving hundreds of thousands of foreign nationals. These actions include the arrest, detention, return, and removal from the United States of foreign nationals who are in violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Violations include losing legal status by failing to abide by the terms and conditions of entry or by engaging in crimes such as violent crimes, document fraud, terrorist activity, and drug smuggling.

INFORMED AND INTERCONNECTED: A MANIFESTO FOR SMARTER CITIES

Harvard Business School, June 2009

<http://www.hbs.edu/research/pdf/09-141.pdf>

The need for a fresh approach to U.S. communities is more urgent than ever because of the biggest global economic crisis since the Great Depression, according to the report. It offers a new approach to community transformation which calls for leaders to use technology to inform and connect people. This process has already begun through such programs as Harlem Children's Zone, Baltimore's CitiStat, Elevate Miami, and others. And they can be replicated. But technology alone is not the answer. Realization of the vision requires leaders to invest in the tools, guide their use, and pave the way for transformation.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PRIVATE CITIZENS KILLED BY CONCEALED HANDGUN PERMIT HOLDERS

Violence Policy Center, July 2009

<http://www.vpc.org/studies/ccw2009.pdf>

Concealed handgun permit holders killed at least seven police officers and 44 private citizens in 31 incidents during the period May 2007 through April 2009 according to the study. The release of the study comes as the U.S. Senate is expected to take up an amendment to the defense authorization bill (S. 1390) that would create a de facto national concealed carry system, overriding the rights of states with more restrictive laws governing the carrying of concealed handguns.

MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS: HOW MANY COME? HOW MANY LEAVE?

Pew Hispanic Center, July 22, 2009

<http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/112.pdf>

The flow of immigrants from Mexico to the United States has declined sharply since mid-decade, but there is no evidence of an increase during this period in the number of Mexican-born migrants returning home from the U.S.

THE NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT AT FIFTEEN

Project Vote, July 2009

<http://www.projectvote.org/images/publications/NVRA/THE%20NVRA%20at%20FIFTEEN--A%20Report%20to%20Congress.pdf>

Signed into law by President Clinton in May of 1993, the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) was hailed by some as “the final achievement of the 1960’s voting rights revolution,” and proponents estimated that it would add 50 million Americans to the voting rolls. However, according to the report, the lack of enforcement, failures of state and federal leadership, and restrictive court decisions have left the full potential of the NVRA unrealized, and have left millions of disenfranchised Americans still awaiting the promise of a truly inclusive democracy.

PREPARING THE WORKERS OF TODAY FOR THE JOBS OF TOMORROW

White House Council of Economic Advisers, July 2009

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/asset.aspx?AssetId=2205>

In this report, the President’s Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) presents a projection of potential developments in the U.S. labor market over the next five to ten years and discusses the preparations necessary to develop the 21st century workforce.

PRINCIPLES FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM: GUIDELINES FOR FIXING OUR BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Center for American Progress, June 24, 2009

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/06/immigration_principles.html

Demographic trends show that an aging United States will need more workers across all occupation levels. Employment-based immigration and family-based immigration complement each other and should not be pitted against one another in a zero-sum game. Target levels should be adjusted to acknowledge that immigration is an engine of economic dynamism and to ensure that close families are not separated for years by outdated limitations. The United States must embrace the inevitable shift toward a well-regulated, legal, global labor market in order to retain our economic leadership.

PROSPECTS FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM IN THE NEW POLITICAL CLIMATE

Brookings Institution, July 2009

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2009/07_immigration_mann_west/07_immigration_mann_west.pdf

The inability over the past decade to enact immigration reform has left a status quo that satisfies virtually no one. Businesses worry about not getting enough highly skilled workers. Laborers complain about competing for jobs with new arrivals and being forced to accept lower wages. Farmers fret about barriers to bringing seasonal workers to the United States. Higher education institutions are unhappy because of difficulties obtaining educational visas for international students.

PUERTO RICANS IN THE UNITED STATES 2007

Pew Hispanic Center, July 13, 2009

<http://pewhispanic.org/files/factsheets/48.pdf>

This statistical profile describes the demographic, employment and income characteristics of the Puerto Rican population in the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. The characteristics of Puerto Ricans are contrasted with the characteristics of all Hispanics and the U.S. population overall.

READY TO ASSEMBLE: GRADING STATE HIGHER EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

Education Sector Reports, June 30, 2009

http://www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/HigherEdSummary.pdf

States need strong higher education systems, now more than ever. In the tumultuous, highly competitive 21st century economy, citizens and workers need knowledge, skills, and credentials in order to prosper, say the authors. Yet many colleges and universities are falling short. To give all students the best possible postsecondary education, states must create smart, effective higher education accountability systems, modeled from the best practices of their peers, and set bold, concrete goals for achievement.

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE NAACP CENTENNIAL CONVENTION

The White House, July 17, 2009

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-NAACP-Centennial-Convention-07/16/2009/

In his first speech before the nation's oldest civil rights organization since taking office, President Obama paid tribute to the NAACP as it celebrated its centennial, delivering what the group's chief executive called his most "forthright speech on racial disparities."

SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR THE ECONOMIC CRISIS: THE U.S. EXPERIENCE

Brookings Institution, July 15, 2009

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2009/0715_social_protection_burtless/0715_social_protection_burtless.pdf

This paper focuses on the measures Congress has taken to protect household incomes and improve the American social safety net. None of the emergency measures adopted by Congress will result in permanent changes to the U.S. system of social protection, but a couple of temporary programs represent dramatic departures from the past. For the first time, Congress authorized generous subsidies so that laid off workers can continue to receive employer-sponsored health insurance.

UNEQUAL UNEMPLOYMENT: RACIAL DISPARITIES IN UNEMPLOYMENT VARY WIDELY BY STATE

Economic Policy Institute, July 15, 2009

http://epi.3cdn.net/63e4d3a687f38a0312_r8m6bxs86.pdf

The United States is suffering its most severe economic crisis in decades. This economic hardship is not shared equally, however, and unemployment rates in many states are far worse than the national figures would suggest, according to the study. Furthermore, the differences between states mask sometimes greater gaps within them, gaps defined by wide, sometimes growing disparities in unemployment rates by race and ethnicity.

VOTING AND REGISTRATION IN THE ELECTION OF NOVEMBER 2008

U.S. Bureau of Census, July 20, 2009

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting/cps2008.html>

About 131 million people reported voting in the 2008 U.S. presidential election, an increase of 5 million from 2004, according to the table package of the U.S. Census Bureau. The increase included about 2 million more black voters, 2 million more Hispanic voters and about 600,000 more Asian voters, while the number of non-Hispanic white voters remained statistically unchanged.

All previous web alerts can be found at:
<http://france.usembassy.gov/web-alert.html>

